

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 08888 031428Z

44

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 H-03 SSO-00 SS-20

PA-04 PRS-01 USIE-00 INR-10 INRE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00

NSC-07 NSCE-00 DRC-01 RSC-01 PM-07 DODE-00 /078 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WAEHDC IMMEDIATE 2459

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 8888

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, IN

SUBJECT: HARCOS FLETCHER

REF: CALCUTTA 1360, CALCUTTA 1361, CALCUTTA 1366

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER GANDHI HAS PERSONALLY INTERVENED
IN THE HARCOS FLETCHER MATTER. MEA ASKS FOR A LITTLE TIME FOR
RESULTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CHARGE CALLED ON JOINT SECRETARY FOR THE AMERICAS
TEJA TO DISCUS THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE HARCOS
FLETCHER CASE REPORTED IN CALCUTTA'S 1360 AND 1361. HE NOTED
THAT WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER RAY HAD CALLED IN PICKERING
AND TOLD HIM THAT MRS. GANDHI HAD TALKED TO HIM ABOUT THE CASE
AND WANTED HARCOS AND FLETCHER OUT OF JAIL. HE ALSO PASSED ON
TO TEJA THE TEXT OF THE PROSECUTIONS PETITION ARGUING AGAINST
GIVING THE DEFENSE THE CHARGES AND SUPPORTING MATERIAL,
NOTING THAT THIS SEEMED INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT TEJA HAS TOLD
US PREVIOUSLY ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE CHARGES.

2. TEJA CONFIRMED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD BECOME INVOLVED
IN THE MATTER ON MEA'S RECOMMENDATION. HE ASKED THAT HER
INVOLVEMENT, HOWEVER, BE KEPT QUITE CONFIDENTIAL. MEA HAS SENT
A DETAILED MEMORANDUM ON THE CASE TO MRS. GANDHI.

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 08888 031428Z

3. TEJA WAS UNAWARE OF THE PROSECUTIONS OPPOSITION TO REVEALING THE CHARGES TO THE DEFENSE OR OF THE PROSECUTIONS CONTINUED ALLEGATIONS OF ESPIONAGE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT OBVIOUSLY MRS. GANDHI'S INTERVENTION HAD NOT YET CAUGHT UP TO THIS ASPECT OF THE CASE. HE WOULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC AS TO THE INTENTIONS OF THE GOI OTHER THAN THAT WE COULD EXPECT FURTHER EFFECTS FROM THIS "HIGH LEVEL" ACTION. HE ASKED THAT WE GIVE THE GOI TIME FOR ITS EFFORTS TO HAVE EFFECT.

4. COMMENT: IT HAS BEEN OBVIOUS FOR SOME TIME THAT OFFICIAL LEVEL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DELHI AND CALCUTTA HAVE NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE. WE ARE CONSTANTLY SURPRISED AT THE MATTERS WHICH CANNOT BE RESOLVED SHORT OF THE PRIME MINISTER; AND THIS NOW APPEARS TO BE ONE OF THEM. WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD GIVE THE GOI THE TIME IT REQUESTS, AND IF POSSIIBLE HOLD OFF ON

CRITICAL COMMENT TO HE PRESS (BUT NOT ROUTINE BRIEFINGS OF THE TYPE WE HAVE BEEN GIVING). WE AGREE THAT CALCUTTA SHOULD KEEP IN TOUCH WITH CHIEF MINISTER RAY AT IT PROPOSES IN CALCUTTA'S 1366, BUT IT SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO DO SO IN A DELIBERATE AND COOPERATIVE WAY NOW THAT THE IMPELLING FORCE IS BEING APPLIED BY MRS. GANDHI.
SCHNEIDER

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